

The House on Thursday approved President Obama's plan to kill the F-22 fighter jet. But Democratic leaders bucked White House veto threats on other programs, and they heatedly rejected a Republican effort to strip more than 550 earmarked expenditures from the \$636 billion military bill.

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Mr. Obama and other political leaders had hailed last week's vote in the Senate to cancel the F-22 as a sign of their progress in changing military spending practices.

But in sometimes tense exchanges on the House floor on Thursday, two Republicans, Representatives Jeff Flake of Arizona and **John Campbell of California**, sought to embarrass some other representatives and to suggest that little had changed in how Congress pushes pet military projects.

While the House voted 269 to 165 to approve an amendment that stripped out money for building more F-22s, it overwhelmingly rejected efforts by Mr. Flake and Mr. Campbell to cut up to \$2.7 billion in earmarks, including money that lawmakers had inserted on behalf of specific companies on 553 smaller projects.

The bill also included more than \$1 billion to continue work on larger projects the administration wants to kill, like a new presidential helicopter, and nearly \$1.2 billion for combat planes that the Pentagon did not request.

But in an echo of the Republican accusations of pork-barrel spending in the huge economic stimulus package this year, much of the debate on the military bill focused on earmarks like \$1.5 million for a gunshot-detection system and \$8 million for a project to upgrade torpedo capabilities.

Mr. Flake said \$200 million of the earmarks were requested by companies that had been clients of the PMA Group, a lobbying firm that is under investigation over its ties to several congressmen, including Representative John P. Murtha, the influential Pennsylvania Democrat who was in charge of the bill.

Mr. Flake, a longtime critic of earmarks, said some of the companies had performed poorly on government work. He also said many of the companies had raised substantial amounts of campaign money for Mr. Murtha and others legislators, including Republicans, who sponsored their projects.

"That simply doesn't look right," Mr. Flake said, adding that the House "ought to want to have a higher standard."

Mr. Murtha, who put together the bill as the chairman of the House military appropriations subcommittee, defended the practice and lashed out at Mr. Flake.

Mr. Murtha said he had long sought earmarks as a way to create jobs in Pennsylvania. He said the state had sent a disproportionate number of soldiers to Iraq and Afghanistan compared with the level of military contracts it had typically received.

He said that he had an obligation to bring work to the small businesses in his area and that some of the earmarks, like \$2.2 million for body-armor research, grew out of his visits with troops in Afghanistan and with wounded troops in hospitals.

“I’m not sure how often Mr. Flake goes to the hospital,” Mr. Murtha said.

Mr. Murtha, who was visibly angry, said several times that the bill included language instructing the Pentagon to seek competitive bids on the earmarked projects, and other lawmakers noted that Congress has the final say on spending decisions.

But Mr. Flake said that in the past, most companies that had sought the earmarks ended up with the contracts.

The overall bill, which would set military appropriations for 2010, passed by 400 to 30. The Senate will take up its version later this year, and the two bills will need to be reconciled in conference.

Mr. Obama had repeatedly threatened to veto any bill that included more money for the F-22, the world’s most advanced fighter, as the Pentagon seeks to shift more from high-tech weaponry to simpler systems the troops can use now.

After the Senate voted 58 to 40 last week to cancel the F-22, Mr. Murtha decided to give up the fight for it as well. He offered the amendment on Thursday that removed \$369 million for parts, which had been meant to be a down payment toward 12 more planes.

The administration has also received support from Congress to scale back a \$160 billion Army modernization plan and other programs.

But the White House warned this week that the president’s advisers would consider recommending a veto if the House went ahead with plans — as it did Thursday — to try to save the troubled effort to create a new presidential helicopter and to finance development of an alternative engine for another new fighter plane, the F-35.

After Thursday’s vote, Tommy Vietor, a White House spokesman, said the president had asked for a review of the House bill, including the earmarks.

Mr. Vietor said that over all, Congressional spending bills included 25 percent fewer earmarks this year than last year.

Still, he said, “We knew from the start that changing the old ways of Washington would not happen overnight.”